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ABSTRACT

This document was developed as a resource for implementing the teaching of writing in adult education programs. Based on curriculum, assessment, diagnosis, prescription, instruction, evaluation, and classroom management. The program is presented in a 12-step systematic sequence. The steps are the following: (1) develop/customize/adopt a writing skills curriculum; (2) design a locator that can help the tester determine the student's status; (3) design assessment instruments that determine to what extent a student needs writing instruction; (4) provide initial information about writing skills to the student before diagnosing the student's writing strengths and weaknesses; (5) diagnose the student's writing; (6) prescribe materials and modes of instruction to meet the student's goals; (7) instruct students based on each student's prescription; (8) provide inservice workshops for teachers; (9) provide both formative and summative evaluation; (10) evaluate the program every six months; (11) devise a recordkeeping system; and (12) develop a classroom management plan. Samples are provided. Techniques for managing the diagnostic-prescriptive process and a brief bibliography conclude the document. (KC)

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TEACHING WRITING TO ADULTS

Resource Series

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Managing the Instructional Program

Installing a Writing Skills Curriculum in Adult Education

A Special Project in New York State
Supported by the Adult Education Act

Two-Year College Development Center
State University of New York at Albany

January 1988

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RESOURCE SERIES

for

Teaching Writing to Adults

Managing the Instructional Program:

Installing A Writing Skills Curriculum In Adult Education

By

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University At Albany
State University of New York

in cooperation with

Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education Program Development
New York State Education Department

1987 - 1988

PREFACE

This document was developed as a resource for installing the teaching of writing in adult education programs. It is one product of the Teaching Writing to Adults Staff Development Project conducted by the Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, State University of New York, in cooperation with the Bureau of Adult and Continuing Education Program Development, New York State Education Department.

The scope of adult education and the considerations of time, clientele and structure present unique problems to the adult education teacher. The authors of this paper, Rose Lamorella and Christina Cummings, are experienced professionals in adult education. Based upon their daily teaching and working with staff and students, they offer their insights and suggestions for one approach to incorporating a writing skills curriculum into an adult education program. The procedures and materials described by Ms. Lamorella and Ms. Cummings constitute an approach that has worked well for their program management. It is not meant to be the "one-and-only" approach but is a sharing with professional colleagues of ideas, strategies and materials that work.

We urge that attention be given to the introduction of this resource paper which provides perspective and outlines the format of the paper. We hope adult educators will find this paper useful in teaching writing, and encourage application of the ideas and materials that are appropriate to local program needs.

During the summer of 1987, the draft of this paper was distributed to selected adult educators across New York State for field review. We appreciate the effort of all who provided critiques, recommendations and suggestions. Each response was carefully examined and a consensus of the suggestions was incorporated. This process resulted in a more usable resource for adult educators.

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MANAGING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: INSTALLING A WRITING SKILLS CURRICULUM IN ADULT EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this resource paper is to provide some ways in which Program Directors and Basic Skills and High School Equivalency Instructors might approach the installation of a writing skills curriculum into an already full program of activities for each student. Since the installation in programs may differ, each topic will be discussed from the viewpoint of a) the installation of a writing skills curriculum into classes where students are placed by specific levels in a single subject area such as writing skills and b) installation into a classroom or learning laboratory setting where students learn a variety of skills in adult basic education and/or skills needed to attain a General Education Diploma. Some suggestions will also be made for programs offering distance learning through television or home study.

This resource paper, designed to support practitioners in the situations given, is based on the following assumptions:

1. The Program Director is committed to the installation of a Writing Skills Curriculum into the program and shows commitment by allowing instructors time for training and planning for installation.

2. Each instructor has participated in at least one Writing Skills training session.

3. The instructors installing Writing Skills already individualize instruction using the diagnostic-prescriptive process in other curricular areas.

Given these assumptions, this paper will discuss the following topics in their relationship to the installation of Writing Skills into Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency classes, learning laboratories, home study and distance learning programs.

CURRICULUM

ASSESSMENT

DIAGNOSIS

PRESCRIPTION

INSTRUCTION

EVALUATION

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

I. THE CURRICULUM

A curriculum, stated simply, is a list of intended learning outcomes in any given curricular area. Usually, one or more goals surround the list of intended learning outcomes. The goals and the intended learning outcomes generally represent what a program offers in a given curricular area. Although the list of intended learning outcomes for the program can be lengthy, it is expected that the instructor will work with only those specific outcomes each student needs to complete his or her specified goal.

* STEP 1. Develop/Customize/Adopt a Writing Skills Curriculum.

Since it is sometimes difficult for teachers to find the time to develop a curriculum, it is often easier to adopt a curriculum that has already been developed. Any curriculum that is adopted should be customized to meet the needs of the program by the instructors of that program. Unless instructors can feel ownership of the curriculum, the curriculum often sits in a drawer unused by either instructors or students.

The process for developing, customizing and adopting a curriculum is as follows:

Review curricula that already exist.
Develop or customize a curriculum to meet program needs.
Describe or list prerequisite skills (skills needed by students before they can begin work on this curriculum).
Attach prerequisites to the curriculum.
Develop guidelines for using the curriculum in each type of class offered in your program.
Arrange training for teachers needing to be trained in the use of the curriculum.

A staff may choose to elect a committee chairperson to work with the director of the program to insure that adequate staff development time is allocated for the above process. Some of the staff development time will be spent by instructors meeting in committees; some of the time will be spent working independently researching curricula, making changes and deciding how to install the curriculum into an individual classroom. Some teamwork may be needed so that instructors can help one another with the installation.

Programs that have fewer instructors may choose to have those instructors work more informally on the above process. Those sites having only one staff member may arrange to work with other sites having one instructor so that curriculum adoption can be achieved.

Programs utilizing television (Telesis, KET Tapes) or home study programs (GRASP) may emphasize those parts of the curriculum that deal with high school equivalency skills. The curriculum may need only slight adaptation, whereas the strategies for use may need to be modified greatly.

Once the curriculum has been adopted, a copy should be placed in each classroom and used by the instructor with each student. Strategies for use can be collected and shared. Some excellent strategies can be found in I. CURRICULUM OUTLINE FOR TEACHING WRITING TO ADULT STUDENTS, Resource Series for Teaching Writing to Adults, written by Dorothy Hammond from curriculum information provided by the Statewide Writing Skills Advisory Committee and available through the Two-Year College Development Center. (1)

The following curriculum was designed by the Statewide Writing Skills Advisory Committee and is currently being field-tested and customized for adoption for use in Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency classes as an activity of the Teaching Writing to Adults Project: (2)

OVERALL PROGRAM GOALS

* Adult students will develop the ability to write adequately in everyday business, academic and personal life.

* High school equivalency students will be able to respond to the GED Writing Sample task, adequately meeting the following evaluation criteria:

  -Demonstrates understanding of the task

  -Demonstrates evidence of relevant ideas

  -Develops the topic with a logical and coherent plan or organization

  -Supports ideas with reasons, examples, details

  -Uses appropriate language clearly and precisely

  -Demonstrates control of the conventions of standard written English

PREREQUISITES

Students should have already gained enough prerequisite skills to be able to write complete sentences, and to combine several sentences in a paragraph to communicate meaning about a topic.

** Most instructors agree that there should be few, if any, prerequisites for adult basic education students. Prerequisites might be necessary to appropriately place students who are preparing for the writing skills part of the high school equivalency test.

** Authors' Comment

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

After appropriate instruction, the adult student will be able to:

1. *Write for different purposes and audiences using a variety of forms and the appropriate level of language.*

   a. *Distinguish among various purposes of writing, such as: to narrate, describe, explain, persuade, and to express self.*

   b. *Identify the audiences to which the piece is directed, such as: self, family, friends, teachers, employers, other unknown or distant audiences.*

   c. *Select the forms in which the piece will be written, such as: memos, essays, excuses, complaints.*

   d. *Use the level of language that is appropriate to the purpose and audience of the writing.*
   e.g. - slang - colloquial - informal - formal

   e. *Write from self-chosen topics as well as teacher-assigned topics.*

2. *Read, understand and accurately follow directions related to writing tasks.*

   Locate and understand the significant words in the task that direct the writer how to carry out the task.

3. *Develop the content of the writing to demonstrate clear understanding of the purpose of the writing task.*

   a. *Generate, select, and focus on ideas that will demonstrate understanding of the purpose of the writing.*

   b. *Use prewriting strategies such as talking, thinking, brainstorming, clustering, list-making, drawing on experiences.*

   c. *Incorporate the information within the topic framework.*

4. *Incorporate relevant, specific and appropriate information.*

   a. *Identify and select relevant information from the prewriting activity.*

   b. *Generate additional appropriate information if/when necessary.*

   c. *Use ideas gained from reading or viewing resources.*

   d. *Use the six journalism questions to generate ideas (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)*

5. *Support ideas with specific reasons, examples, or details.*

   Write a general idea statement using specific reasons, examples, or details.

6. *Organize writing logically and coherently.*

   a. *Select an appropriate method of organization (such as chronological, sequential, cause-effect, compare-contrast, specific to general/ general to specific classification, inductive, spatial).*

   b. *Use a framework that has an introduction, body and conclusion.*

   c. *Use transitional words or phrases to provide coherence and clarity to the writing.*

7. *Write using specific, clear, vivid, precise, and accurate language.*

   a. *Expand vocabulary using the dictionary, thesaurus and other references.*

   b. *Vary vocabulary and avoid repetitions.*

   c. *Use strong action verbs and specific nouns.*

   d. *Use modifiers such as adjectives, adverbs, phrases, clauses.*

   e. *Vary sentence structure by combining sentences, contrasting sentences, compounding sentences.*

8. *Demonstrate control of the conventions of standard written English with few or no mechanical errors.*

   a. *Use correct structure and syntax. (See Teaching Writing To Adults, p. 81)*
      1. *Avoids run-on sentences*
      2. *Avoids sentence fragments*
      3. *Avoids subject/verb agreement errors*
      4. *Uses correct pronoun reference*
      5. *Varies sentence structure*

   b. *Use correct word choice/ usage. (See Teaching Writing to Adults, p. 81)*

      1. *Uses concrete language*
      2. *Uses words accurately*
      3. *Uses idioms correctly*
      4. *Forms words correctly*
      5. *Understands annotation/denotation*
      6. *Uses appropriate level of language*
      7. *Uses adequate vocabulary*
      8. *Avoids unnecessary repetition*
      9. *Avoids clumsy usage*

   c. *Use correct mechanics: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, handwriting. (See Teaching Writing to Adults, p. 82)*

      1. *Spelling*
         a. ie/ei b. adding suffixes c. reversals d. other

      2. *Punctuation*
         a. end punctuation
            1. period 2. question mark 3. exclamation point
         b. quotation marks
         c. apostrophes
            1. contraction 2. possession

d. commas
   1. series
   2. appositives
   3. compound sentences
   4. direct address
   5. quotations
   6. letter format
e. other

3. Capitalization
   a. proper nouns and titles
   b. first word in sentence
   c. in quotations

9. Revise and edit his/her own writing to improve:
   - logical development
   - clarity and coherence
   - word choiceso that it conveys the intended message to the reader.

   a. Revise and edit a piece of writing to determine that it meets the following criteria:

      - Understanding of task
      - Support materials for ideas
      - Evidence of ideas
      - Use of language
      - Organization
      - Use of conventions of standard written English

   b. Respond to the writing of others through questions and discussion.

10. Use writing as a tool to process information and reinforce learning in all content areas.

   a. Use writing to:
      - gain information
      - understand logical relation
      - communicate understanding
      - respond to reading
      - discover meaning
      - formulate questions

   b. Use writing for creative thinking and problem solving.

   c. Use writing to communicate:
      - emotion
      - values
      - opinions
      - ideas
      - experience

After a writing skills curriculum has been adopted, instructors will need to determine the materials and learning activities that can be used to help students accomplish each learning outcome. The works listed in the bibliography contain many helpful suggestions for materials and activities. Additionally, as program staff gains experience working through the curriculum with students, some staff members can share ideas about techniques and uses of materials at informal gatherings or meetings called for that purpose.

II. ASSESSMENT

Once the curriculum has been adopted, an assessment process needs to be designed to appropriately place the student in the curriculum. An assessment process in writing is much the same as the assessment process already in place for other curricular areas. The instruments used can help determine where to place the student in the writing skills curriculum.

The assessment process begins with interviewing the student to ascertain the student's goal and is usually part of the intake procedure of any program. A locator is a simple assessment of skills that allows the tester to determine whether the student forms letters and, to what extent the student writes words in sentences. Once the tester determines the student's minimal writing competency a more formal or lengthier assessment instrument can be administered to determine placement in the writing skills curriculum. This assessment can also help the tester determine whether the student will be best placed in a basic skills class or one which prepares student's to pass the high school eqivalency exam. The student's goal is the primary impetus for deciding which locators and assessments will be administered.

* STEP 2 Design a locator(s) which can help the tester determine a student's minimal writing competency and helps determine which further assessment instruments could be used, if any.

The locator instruments for the writing skills curriculum can be designed by committee, guidance staff or individual instructors. Instruments need to be designed so that they can be quickly administered and quickly scanned to determine whether the student can form letters, respond to directions and compose a simple sentence. A locator should indicate what further assessment instruments need to be administered (if any at this time) to place students appropriately in the writing skills curriculum or writing skills class.

Some consideration should be given to deciding who will administer the locator. In some locations, the guidance staff administers the writing locator and assessment since it is an integral part of the intake and assessment services already provided. In single class sites, the instructor will probably be the one to administer the writing locator and subsequent assessments just as he/she administers assessments to determine the student's appropriate level in reading and mathematics. Home study instructors generally place questionnaires and/or other assessments to students in the study packets delivered by the library system. Television tutors can request that students compose simple passages and mail them to the tutor at a specified time.

Some locator possibilities include:

Filling in a simple form or brief questionnaire.
Stating an educational goal in one or two sentences.
Write a few sentences or a paragraph on a topic

The following pages provide three sample locators for your consideration.

WRITING SKILLS LOCATOR

SAMPLE 1

*NAME*_____ *DATE*_____

Some sentences about myself:

*I live in....*_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PUNCTUATION match; draw a line from the word(s) to the mark:

Question mark	!
Period	?
Comma	:
Exclamation point	-
Colon	.
Dash	;
Semi-colon	,

* *Designed by Catherine Murphy, Albany Adult Learning Center*

WRITING SKILLS LOCATOR

SAMPLE 2

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

In a sentence or two, state your reason(s) for attending the Adult Learning Center,

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List or describe the types of writing that have been required of you in the last few months.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WRITING SKILLS LOCATOR
SAMPLE 3

NAME _____ DATE _____

Write a few sentences about either your favorite holiday or your favorite season of the year. Explain what you especially enjoy doing at that time.

** Step 3 Design assessment instruments that determine to what extent a student needs instruction in writing skills.*

Once a locator indicates the student's minimal writing competency, the next task is to determine specific placement in the the writing skills curriculum. A writing assessment should have the following characteristics:

1. *The task is clearly defined so that the student can understand what needs to be done and respond in writing.*

2. *The instrument can be evaluated using holistic scoring.*

3. *The results of the assessment easily place the student in the curriculum and/or in the appropriate class.*

Since writing is usually one of several assessments that a students is presented with when entering a program or a class, the guidance staff or individual instructor can use all information gained from the writing skills assessment as well as information gained from any other assessments and intake interview to place the student in the writing skills curriculum. It should also be noted that not all assessment needs to be done at intake and that a writing skills assessment may very well be done in the classroom or learning laboratory after the student has begun work in other subject areas.

When the writing skills assessment is administered at intake, the tester should spend a few minutes interviewing the student to determine the place writing may have in relationship to a student's goals. This provides much useful information to the tester for determining which assessments should be administered at this time (if any). If the assessments are administered later in the classroom or learning laboratory the same process should take place. It is important that each student sees the relationship of writing to his/her stated goals.

Home study and television tutors would use assessments that ascertain whether students are ready to accept instruction in writing skills to prepare for the high school equivalency test. The interview with the student could take place by telephone and the assessments could be mailed to the student. The student would be placed in the writing skills curriculum according to the results of the assessment.

Assessments could include asking students to write the following:

Description of a Typical Day
One to three paragraphs about Returning to School
Description of a Favorite Hobby
Explanation of a Game

A wide variety of writing skills assessments should be available. Some can be created by program staff and some could be chosen from commercial materials. All assessments should have the characteristics stated above. Sample assessments are shown on the following pages.

WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

SAMPLE 1

NAME _____ *DATE* _____

Read each of the three writing tasks and then choose one. On a separate paper, write your ideas in the form of several sentences, a paragraph or a composition of two or three paragraphs.

1. *Write about your reasons for deciding to attend the Adult Learning Center. If you are interested in working towards your GED, give some reasons why this is your goal. If you have other educational or vocational goals, please include reasons for these goals as well.*

2. *Write about a job you have done in your life. It does not matter if you received pay for the job or not. You could write about helping a friend move, caring for a child or refinishing a piece of furniture. Please identify the job and give a description of what you did to accomplish it.*

3. *Write about one thing that you like about yourself. Your sentences could include things that you do well, ways in which you help others or ways in which you express your sense of humor. State what you like about yourself and write a few sentences or paragraphs about it.*

WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

SAMPLE 2

NAME _____ DATE _____

TASK

In one to three paragraphs describe a game in such a way that someone else can understand the game well enough to play it.

WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

SAMPLE 3

NAME _____ DATE _____

TASK

State your favorite kind of music and give some reasons why you find it more appealing than other kinds of music.

III. DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis is the act of analyzing the student's strengths and weaknesses in relationship to a specific curriculum. Diagnosis in the area of writing skills begins with the instructor's review and analysis of all available information provided from intake interviews, student's goal statement, locators, and assessments. The instructor will diagnose the student's writing competency with the student after providing the student with information about the writing skills curriculum and writing evaluation procedures. The student may be asked to write another passage to aid with the diagnosis. The diagnosis is based on the student's stated goals.

**STEP 4 Provide initial information about writing skills to the student before diagnosing the student's writing skills.*

The student can provide a wealth of information about his/her attitude and experiences about writing. Information may be gained from assessments and student interviews. The instructor can interview each student to determine the reasons why writing is an important activity to the student's stated goals and the ways in which the instructor can help the student achieve those goals. During the interview, the instructor will spend time with the student explaining the parts of the writing curriculum, components of the writing process and various reasons and purposes that people generally write. General information about the writing process and the writing skills curriculum is given so that the relationship between writing and the student's stated goal can become clearer.

The interview takes place before the diagnosis to make the student comfortable with the process of writing, emphasize the positive nature of writing and eliminate some of the mystique about writing. Since many students are apprehensive about writing because they lack experience, they lack skills or fear they have nothing to say, this initial preparation eliminates the pressure of immediate performance. The student will have the opportunity to verbalize concerns and the instructor the opportunity to alleviate those concerns. Most students are eager to write once the stage has been set to do so.

For those students preparing for the writing skills part of the high school equivalency test, the instructor should give initial information about the holistic scoring process. A chart describing a rating scale and the skills that will be evaluated could be shared with the student.

Those instructors involved in home study or distance learning through television may accomplish the interview over the telephone. If this is not possible, then information sheets and questionnaires can be mailed to the student for response before diagnosis is made.

*STEP 5 Diagnose the student's writing.

The initial diagnosis can be made from the student's intake assessments. If none were administered at intake, the instructor will need to assess the student following the interview. The instructor could use the locators and assessments shown in the Assessment section of this paper or assign a task from materials at hand that coincides with the student's reading level. A checklist similar to the one on the next page could be used to diagnose the student's writing skills level. The diagnosis should include the student's strengths rather than a long list of weaknesses. The student and the instructor should agree on which learning outcome will become the focus of the instruction.

This diagnosis step will primarily be the same for instructors in classes, learning laboratories, home study or distance learning programs.

NAME _____ DATE _____

STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Understanding the task

1. Did you write on the topic? ____ Yes ____ No

   Restate the topic in your own words.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. State the purpose for your writing.

   ____ To inform ____ To persuade ____ To request

   ____ To describe ____ To narrate ____ To entertain

   ____ To explain ____ Other _____

3. Did you use a suitable format for this purpose? ____ Yes ____ No

   The format I used was

   ____ Composition ____ Story

   ____ Letter ____ Other _____

4. Are you aware of the intended audience? ____ Yes ____ No

   My audience is _____

5. Did you keep a consistent point of view? ____ Yes ____ No

Organization

1. Does your writing demonstrate a plan of organization?

   a. Do you use topic sentences? ____ Yes ____ No

   b. Are your paragraphs developed in a logical and coherent way? ____ Yes ____ No

   c. Do you use appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs? ____ Yes ____ No

   d. Did you eliminate extraneous information? ____ Yes ____ No

   e. Did you write a conclusion? ____ Yes ____ No

Ideas

1. *Are your ideas clearly stated?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
2. *Are your ideas relevant to the topic?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
3. *Are your ideas well thought out?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
4. *Are your ideas original?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

Support Material

1. *Are your ideas supported with relevant and specific details?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

Language

1. *Did you use clear, concrete language?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
2. *Did you avoid unnecessary repetition and clumsy phrases?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
3. *Did you use vivid and imaginative language?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
4. *Did you use a variety of words?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
5. *Did you use words accurately and form them correctly?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
6. *Did you demonstrate appropriate levels of usage?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

   *formal*_____ *informal*_____ *slang*_____

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH

1. *Is your sentence structure free of errors? (fragments, run-on sentences)* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
2. *Did you vary sentence structure?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
3. *Did you use adequate:*

   Spelling? ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

   Capitalization? ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

   Punctuation? ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
4. *Does your writing show accurate subject-verb agreement?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
5. *Does your writing show accurate pronoun usage?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*
6. *Does your writing show accurate tense usage?* ___ *Yes* ___ *No*

IV. PRESCRIPTION

Writing a prescription is the act of deciding which materials and modes of instruction the student will use to attain specific learning outcomes. Consideration must be given to materials that instruct as well as those that provide practice. Assignments are usually written on prescription forms and placed in a student's folder.

*Step 6 *Prescribe specific materials and modes of instruction to achieve the learning outcomes and attain the student's goals.*

The instructor will write a prescription that takes into consideration the student's writing skills level (ABE,GED), the diagnosed strengths and weaknesses, and the materials and resources that are currently available. The mode of instruction could include large group, small group or one-to-one. The prescription could include tasks that have prerequisite steps such as:

Interview a peer and write about the person.

View a movie or video tape and write a reaction to it.

Attend a meeting and write the minutes.

Telephone for information about a product and write a report of the findings.

Instructors in classrooms dealing only with writing skills will review prescriptions often to plan for large group or small group instruction. Lists of students needing the same type of skills can assist the instructor in deciding when large or small group instruction would be appropriate.

Instructors in learning laboratories and classrooms dealing with multi-levels, multi-subjects will probably prescribe instruction on a one-to-one basis since rarely are two students working on exactly the same outcome, level or curricular area at the same. Two to three students could be assigned to work with each other if appropriate.

Home study or distance learning instructors will generally only prescribe instruction that relies on instructional materials. Some instructions/directions may need to be written for materials that are generally used for practice. Materials or task sheets may need to be prepared specifically for home study students.

V. INSTRUCTION

*Step 7 Instruct students based on each student's prescription.

Instruction in writing skills classrooms can take place in large groups, small groups and on a one-to-one basis. Large group instruction may be reserved for any skill that all students need to learn or to review. Various parts of the writing process such as brainstorming lend themselves to large group or small group instruction. Small group instruction can be arranged in any area in which more than one student has exhibited a need. The instructor can determine those needs by reviewing the individual prescriptions and grouping students accordingly. One-to-one instruction is offered to students in all other instances. Peer to peer interaction is encouraged where appropriate.

Teaching writing in multi-level, multi- subject classrooms or learning laboratories has the following characteristics:

1. The students will not all be writing at the same time. At any given time, students will be pursuing a variety of subjects. Some students will not have a writing prescription at all.

2. The instructor often deals with the student's whole program so that prescriptions are written for reading, math and writing skills. Levels for each of these subject areas are usually different and allowances for the differences need to be made.

3. Students who have writing improvement as a goal will have diverse reading levels, and writing ability, so the instructor may be working with students on various levels in the writing skills curriculum at the same time.

4. Instruction usually takes place on a one-to-one basis. The instructor generally communicates with each student each time the student attends and has a good idea of what the student is working on in each subject area; consequently, time for each can be proportioned accordingly.

5. Prescriptions are updated in each subject area as students complete work in that area or as needed.

Home study and distance learning instructors have situations similar to the single classroom site instructors and learning laboratory specialists. Instruction is communicated to the student through study packets and/or telephone conversations. Spot instruction is often accomplished through telephone conversations. Students may have the option of visiting a site for spot instruction if needed.

Individualizing writing instruction with an adult population that has a diversity of life experiences and educational backgrounds has many advantages, but the most important one is that it provides a tremendous opportunity for people to express themselves. In the beginning, the management may seem very difficult. The instructor needs to realize that it cannot all be put into place overnight.

**Step 8* *Provide inservice workshops to present new techniques and materials as well to as discuss the excitement and frustration of teaching writing skills.*

Instructors need to become familiar with a variety of techniques for teaching each stage of the writing process. New materials and resources need to be reviewed and experimented with as much as possible. Time will need to be scheduled for instructors to absorb the process, learn new techniques and put those techniques into practice. Additionally, instructors need to spend some time reviewing the goals and learning outcomes of the writing skills curriculum so that it can be altered to meet individual student needs.

VI. EVALUATION

Both formative and summative evaluation are done with each student. All student work is evaluated on an ongoing basis in each classroom, learning laboratory, home study and distance learning program. Students are asked to participate in the evaluation process as much as possible.

**Step 9 Provide a design that includes both formative and summative evaluation for students working on writing skills.*

Evaluation of student work needs to be ongoing. This is the formative evaluation stage and occurs when a student has completed one or two specific outcomes. As a student completes a writing piece, the instructor will evaluate it according to the learning outcome that was to be achieved. For some students, the writing will be evaluated using the entire six point, six segment Criteria Chart used for rating the GED Writing Sample; for other students, only one segment of the rating scale may be used if that one segment relates to the writing skills outcome on which the student has been working. (See chart on the following page.)

When the student has completed work on a number of writing skills outcomes, a summative evaluation will be completed by the instructor. This evaluation may include asking the student to perform a task on which the entire Criteria Chart will be used to determine a rating for a writing piece. The instructor may use this evaluation to determine whether the student is ready to begin new learning outcomes, has become more proficient at the present learning outcomes, or demonstrates readiness to pass the writing sample portion of the GED.

Instructors need to design or choose instruments for both formative and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is usually done by the instructor. Summative evaluation may be administered by either the instructor or guidance staff.

**Step 10 Plan to evaluate the success of the installation of the writing skills curriculum every six months to make necessary changes.*

As with any installation, progress needs to be evaluated by all persons involved. The program director should plan meetings with guidance staff and all instructional staff involved with writing skills to see what changes, if any, need to be made. Some means of student evaluation of the installation's success can be devised. Surveys can be used to ascertain what students feel about the installation. Some students may choose to write a letter to the program director expressing feelings about the installation. Changes in the program can be made on the basis of all the collected information.

Six Point Criteria Scale

Criteria	Level 6	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Purpose	Demonstrates clear and definite understanding of purpose of task	Demonstrates acceptable understanding of purpose of task	Demonstrates evidence of understanding of purpose of task	Demonstrates some evidence of understanding of purpose, but may include digressions	Demonstrates little understanding of purpose of task	Minimally addresses the assigned topic
Content	Content includes several highly substantive ideas	Content includes clearly stated, relevant ideas	Content includes sufficient, appropriate ideas	Content is limited to simple listing or haphazard recitation of ideas	Content is marked by superficial or inappropriate ideas	Content is marked by lack of appropriate ideas
Organization	Develops topic with a logical and coherent plan of organization	Develops topic with a clear plan of organization	Develops topic with an adequate plan of organization	Develops topic with a limited or insufficient plan of organization	Develops topic with little or no plan of organization	Plan of organization not generally evident
Support	Uses support material that is relevant, specific, and substantive	Provides effective support for each major point	Provides sufficient, but less effective, support material	Support material is insufficient or irrelevant	Support material is inadequate or unsupported	Support material is generally not evident
Language	Uses specific, vivid, precise language	Uses appropriate language but somewhat less vivid or specific	Uses appropriate language	Uses trite, ordinary, imprecise language	Uses immature or inappropriate language	Language often fails to communicate
CSWE	Uses Conventions of Standard Written English with few or no errors in mechanics	Demonstrates controlled use of CSWE with only occasional errors in mechanics	Use of CSWE is generally reliable and errors in mechanics do not interfere with communication	Repeated weakness in the CSWE which interfere with communication	Errors in the CSWE seriously interfere with communication	Demonstrates lack of control of the CSWE

The asterisk symbol (*) is used to designate a paper that cannot be scored because it is:

1) a blank paper; OR
2) so illegible that no sense can be made of the response; OR
3) off-topic; written on a topic other than the one assigned.

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Teaching Writing to Adults

VII. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Management of a classroom of students in adult education includes individualizing instruction in large groups, small groups, and on a one-to-one basis using an instructional design such as the diagnostic-prescriptive process. Management also includes using a record-keeping system for a student's assessment, diagnosis, prescription, student writing and evaluations of the student's work. Conferencing with students is another part of classroom management.

**Step 11 Devise a record-keeping system that includes each student's diagnosis, prescription, student writing and evaluations.*

Adult Learning Centers utilizing guidance staff can have students bring the writing skills assessment to the instructor. The instructor will prepare a folder that contains the student's diagnosis, prescription and any assignment on which the student will be working. The student is given a second folder in which to keep completed writing samples. This second folder will show the student's writing progress over a period of time.

Single classroom sites and learning laboratories that do not utilize a guidance staff can use the dual folder system to keep track of student work, but may exhibit a few differences in management style from sites that do utilize a guidance staff. The differences may be as follows:

1. *The instructor usually does the interviewing and assessments.*
2. *The folder containing diagnosis and prescription may be the same one that contains diagnosis and prescriptions in other curricular areas. Evaluations may be kept in the same folder.*
3. *A different color folder is often used to contain the student's completed writing.*

Instructors working with home study or distance learning may use one folder for everything that is kept where the instructor works. The instructor may make a copy of the writing and send the original back to the student so that when instruction takes place over the telephone, both parties have access to the same information.

**Step 12 Develop a management plan for the classroom including time allotments for large group, small group, one-to one instruction, conferencing and record-keeping.*

Instructors installing a writing skills curriculum need to develop strategies for individualizing instruction. Many people find it useful to begin students working on individual prescriptions the first twenty minutes of a class period before conferencing with one student. The next twenty minutes could be spent conferencing with any one student, updating prescriptions, or teaching small groups or one large group. During the last part of the class period, students would again work on individual prescriptions.

The following section describes some techniques of using the diagnostic-prescriptive process with two different students while the others are working on individual prescriptions.

TECHNIQUES FOR MANAGING THE DIAGNOSTIC-PRESCRIPTIVE PROCESS

The following management techniques are those that are used in a learning laboratory. These techniques are easily adapted to classrooms, home study and distance learning programs that use one-to-one instruction for part of the class time. The writing of each of two students will be used to demonstrate the way in which one instructor managed the diagnosis, prescription, instruction and evaluation of each.

STUDENT A

The following compositions were written by a student who was formerly in an English-as-a-second language student. Her stated goal is to improve her writing and spelling. She has actively been pursuing this goal for the past several weeks.

Initial Comments From the Instructor

At intake, the student was reluctant to write a composition because she felt that she could not write or spell well enough. For a few sessions until she felt comfortable, she agreed to respond in writing to questions from her reading assignments. The answers from her reading assignments were used as an informal locator. No formal assessment instrument was used at that time.

This is the student's first attempt at writing a longer piece after a number of weeks spent concentrating on sentence writing and spelling skills. This piece was used to place her in the writing skills curriculum. A checklist was used to identify her strengths and weaknesses and together, the instructor and student, chose several skills that the student felt comfortable working with initially.

TASK

Write the first draft of a composition about an experience you have had with memorable weather. You can tell about the circumstances, the time, the place, and the people involved. Try to write an introduction that will not only lead into your subject, but will also be interesting, perhaps by setting up some surprise or suspense. In the second paragraph, you may wish to write a vivid description of the weather experience itself. Try to build up a powerful impact by giving many details. In your final paragraph, tell about the results or aftermath of the extreme weather. You may wish to concentrate on how the weather affected you personally, and on what you thought and felt about your experience. (Adapted from Amsco Publications.....3.....) (3)

In summer of 1974. I had a bed experience. The experience is one day me and my family want to pickinck whom we was there having good time. There's a big storm and lighting came to spoil the picknick.

The hard rain and lighting come so fast we don't have time to pack all the food to the cooler. I told my sisther-in-law to go and get the car whall me, and all the rest of us pack the picknick staff. In a short time the lithing hit not to far from us. All the was runing to safty, bout we almost got kill the ligthin hit about 10 feet from us we felt the lighting pass throught are bodies, and are hair was standing, and the ground was so bight you would find a needle we were 4 people and were so scared we didn't know what was going on bout the people was running to the safty saw the lightning hit by us they thought we were killed. After it all over they said it's miracle. 22

NAME Student A DATE _____

STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Understanding the Task

1. *Did you write on the topic?* ✓ Yes ___ No

   Restate the topic in your own words.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. *State the purpose for your writing.*

   ___ To inform ___ To persuade ___ To request

   ___ To describe ✓ To narrate ___ To entertain

   ___ To explain ___ Other _____

3. *Did you use a suitable format for this purpose?* ___ Yes ___ No

   The format I used was

   ___ Composition ___ Story

   ___ Letter ___ Other _____

4. *Are you aware of the intended audience?* ___ Yes ___ No

   My audience is _____

5. *Did you keep a consistent point of view?* ___ Yes ___ No

Organization

1. *Does your writing demonstrate a plan of organization?*

   a. *Do you use topic sentences?* ___ Yes ___ No

   b. *Are your paragraphs developed in a logical and coherent way?* ___ Yes ___ No

   c. *Do you use appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs?* ✓ Yes ___ No

   d. *Did you eliminate extraneous information?* ___ Yes ___ No

   e. *Did you write a conclusion?* ___ Yes ✓ No

Ideas

1. *Are your ideas clearly stated?* ✓ Yes ___ No
2. *Are your ideas relevant to the topic?* ✓ Yes ___ No
3. *Are your ideas well thought out?* ___ Yes ___ No
4. *Are your ideas original?* ___ Yes ___ No

Support Material

1. *Are your ideas supported with relevant and specific details?* ___ Yes ___ No

Language

1. *Did you use clear, concrete language?* ___ Yes ___ No
2. *Did you avoid unnecessary repetition and clumsy phrases?* ___ Yes ___ No
3. *Did you use vivid and imaginative language?* ___ Yes ___ No
4. *Did you use a variety of words?* ✓ Yes ___ No
5. *Did you use words accurately and form them correctly?* ___ Yes ___ No
6. *Did you demonstrate appropriate levels of usage?* ✓ Yes ___ No

   *formal*_____ *informal*_____ *slang*_____

CSWE

1. *Is your sentence structure free of errors? (fragments, run-on sentences)* ___ Yes ✓ No
2. *Did you vary sentence structure?* ___ Yes ___ No
3. *Did you use adequate:*

   Spelling? ___ Yes ✓ No

   Capitalization? ___ Yes ___ No

   Punctuation? ___ Yes ✓ No
4. *Does your writing show accurate subject-verb agreement?* ___ Yes ___ No
5. *Does your writing show accurate pronoun usage?* ___ Yes ___ No
6. *Does your writing show accurate tense usage?* ___ Yes ✓ No

In the summer of 1974, I had a bad experience.

One day my family and I went to on a picnic. When we were there having a good time, a big storm and lighten came to spoil the picnic.

The hard rain and lightening so fast we didn't have time to pack all the food into the cooler. I told my sisther-in-law to go and get the car while we packed all the rest of the staff.

In a short time the lighten hit not too far from us.

All the ~~pep~~ people were running to safetey but we didn't. We almost got killed. The lighten hit about 10 feet from us. We felt the lighten pass through our bodies and the hair was standing on end and the ground was so bright you would find a needle. We were 4 people and we were so scared we didn't know what was going on.

The people who were running to safety saw the lighting shit by us and they thought we were killed.

After it was all over they came and saw us. They were surpras and said it's a miracle to come out frome that.

This was an experience that I will not forget intell I dai.

The diagnostic-prescriptive process begins by discussing with the student what instructional plan should be developed for the continued writing of longer works. At this point, the instructor could introduce a checklist that focuses on various writing skills in the curriculum. Later, the student may be asked to use this checklist to determine whether or not the piece of writing displays the skills that he or she has been working on.

The initial response to a student's writing should include emphasis on the strengths of the writing as well as the areas that need improvement. This student demonstrated a good understanding of the purpose of the composition. She selected an experience that was memorable. She described the circumstances surrounding the experience, and she created a feeling of suspense about what might happen. The composition shows a sense of organization and keeps a consistent point of view. In spite of the grammatical and spelling errors, the language is appropriate. There is also good use of transitional words and evidence of sentence variety. Students are usually aware of the shortcomings in their writing and they may be reluctant to write. They need to see the positive aspects of their writing, and they need to see that they can write about their ideas and experiences holistically as they make improvements in individual areas.

It is effective to diagnose three or four areas from a piece of writing. These are the areas where the student will receive ongoing instruction. Much of the diagnosis and the prescription that follows evolved from the student's articulation of her inability to manage certain writing skills.

DIAGNOSIS

From this composition, we have chosen to look at what is needed in the following areas:

a. *Organization: A separate concluding paragraph of a few sentences is needed to add to the overall effectiveness of this piece of writing. (Curriculum item 6b)*

b. *Run-on Sentences: The student was aware that she was not in control of where to stop and start sentences and that made this a good area to begin instruction. Curriculum item 8a)*

c. *Verb Tense: This is also an area in which improvement will need to be made and although it will take time, working with the student's own writing is much more effective than working only from books and instructional materials. (Curriculum item 8a)*

d. *Spelling: The student is aware that spelling is an area in which much improvement needs to be made and she feels frustration about this. To help the student feel more positive about this, it was interesting to count for her the number of words in the composition which were spelled correctly. This activity made this student feel very encouraged. (Curriculum item 8c)*

PRESCRIPTION

The student's prescription sheet looked something like this.

PRESCRIPTION	*INSTRUCTION/MATERIALS*
Run-on Sentences	*1. Read the paper with the instructor to hear where sentences end and begin.* *2. Correct the paper for run-on sentences.*
Organization	*1. Read two or three model compositions that are constructed with opening, middle and concluding paragraphs which the instructor has provided.* *2. Rewrite a concluding paragraph for your own composition and show it to your instructor.*
Verb Tense	*1. See the instructor for help with verb tense.* *2. Correct your paper for errors in verb tense.* *3. Continue with ongoing assignments on verb tense.*
Spelling	*1. Use the dictionary to correct spelling errors that were noted in the discussion of the paper.* *2. Use spelling book for on-going instruction.* *3. Compile personal spelling list from your own writing and enter list on TRS-80 Computer as you learned to do using "authoring" program.*

INSTRUCTION

Because this student is working on writing skills in a learning laboratory, the instruction given to her will be on a one-to-one basis. The instructor began working through the prescription by reading the paper with the student and placing appropriate punctuation where sentences ended and began. Then the instructor showed the student two or three model compositions and talked with her about opening, middle and concluding paragraphs. The student was then asked to write a concluding paragraph and show it to the instructor.

Once the concluding paragraph was written and noted by the instructor, the student received some instruction in verb tense. After instruction, the student was able to look for verb tense errors and correct them. After corrections in verb tense were noted by the instructor, the student continued to correct her paper for spelling errors.

The student was shown what needed to be done with the paper to make its meaning clearer. The student then rewrote the paper. The second writing is included after her first paper. It should be noted that the second composition is not free of errors, but shows better development than the first. The re-written paper was a result of interaction between the student and the instructor and not simply a recopying of corrections made by the instructor.

EVALUATION

Upon completion of the second assignment, a new prescription was made for the student that reflects a continuation of skills to be learned. This will be done each time a student receives an evaluation by the instructor that warrants a prescription change. No summative evaluation will be done at this time.

This student is now writing regularly and seems satisfied with her progress. Since her stated goal is to learn to write better, she has continually taken the appropriate steps to achieve that goal.

STUDENT B

The following compositions were written by a student who was a candidate for the GED. This student's goal was to pass the GED and enter an office occupations program.

TASK

The manager of a local television station is conducting a survey to find out how adults think advertising affects people's spending decisions. Those interested in explaining their point of view are to write a composition about the topic. Explain to the manager how you think advertising affects people's spending decisions. Include your reasons. (Taken from The Cambridge Program for the GED Writing Sample) (4)

My views on advertising affecting people's spending decisions are I think it is bad in one sense and good in another.

Why I think it is bad to advertise is because, a lot of advertising is on television and children watch toy commercials and want their parents to go out and buy them everything they see on T.V.

I think that advertising is good if you are in business for yourself. It is very good for business to advertise whether it be on television, newspaper radio or in anyway that they can get across to the public.

If there wasn't advertising on T.V. a lot of people who are disabled or bedridden wouldn't have a chance to see what kind of offers are out there for them. For instance, a lot of schools and colleges, are advertising and that's good for those people to be aware of. Also, there are home courses for people to take. I am more for advertising than against it.

NAME Student B DATE _____

STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Understanding the task

1. Did you write on the topic? ___ Yes ✓ No

   Restate the topic in your own words.

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. State the purpose for your writing.

   ___ To inform ___ To persuade ___ To request

   ___ To describe ___ To narrate ___ To entertain

   ✓ To explain ___ Other _____

3. Did you use a suitable format for this purpose? ___ Yes ___ No

   The format I used was

   ___ Composition ___ Story

   ___ Letter ___ Other _____

4. Are you aware of the intended audience? ___ Yes ✓ No

   My audience is _____

5. Did you keep a consistent point of view? ___ Yes ___ No

Organization

1. Does your writing demonstrate a plan of organization?

   a. Do you use topic sentences? ___ Yes ___ No

   b. Are your paragraphs developed in a logical and coherent way? ___ Yes ✓ No

   c. Do you use appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs? ___ Yes ___ No

   d. Did you eliminate extraneous information? ___ Yes ___ No

   e. Did you write a conclusion? ___ Yes ✓ No

Ideas

1. *Are your ideas clearly stated?* ___ Yes. ✓ No.
2. *Are your ideas relevant to the topic?* ✓ Yes. ___ No.
3. *Are your ideas well thought out?* ___ Yes. ✓ No.
4. *Are your ideas original?* ✓ Yes. ___ No.

Support Material

1. *Are your ideas supported with relevant and specific details?* ___ Yes ✓ No

Language

1. *Did you use clear, concrete language?* ___ Yes ___ No
2. *Did you avoid unnecessary repetition and clumsy phrases?* ___ Yes ___ No
3. *Did you use vivid and imaginative language?* ___ Yes ___ No
4. *Did you use a variety of words?* ___ Yes ___ No
5. *Did you use words accurately and form them correctly?* ___ Yes ___ No
6. *Did you demonstrate appropriate levels of usage?* ___ Yes ___ No

   *formal*_____ *informal*_____ *slang*_____

CSWE

1. *Is your sentence structure free of errors? (fragments, run-on sentences)* ___ Yes ✓ No
2. *Did you vary sentence structure?* ___ Yes ___ No
3. *Did you use adequate:*

   Spelling? ✓ Yes ___ No

   Capitalization? ✓ Yes ___ No

   Punctuation? ___ Yes ___ No
4. *Does your writing show accurate subject-verb agreement?* ___ Yes ___ No
5. *Does your writing show accurate pronoun usage?* ___ Yes ✓ No
6. *Does your writing show accurate tense usage?* ___ Yes ___ No

These are my views on advertising affecting peoples spending decisions. I think Advertising is bad in one sense and good in another. I think it is bad to advertise because a lot of advertising is on television and Children watch quite a bit of T.V. they see the toy commercials and want their parents to go right out and buy them everything they see.

I think that advertising is good if you are in business for your self. It is very good for a business to advertise whether it be television, newspaper, or radio anyway that can get ideas across to the public.

If there wasn't advertising on T.V. a lot of people who are disabled or confined to the home wouldn't have a chance to see what kinds of offers are out there for them. For instance, some drug stores advertise which is good for the home bound person. Schools and colleges advertise for home courses to take. These are especially good for the people to be aware of.

There are a lot of ways to advertise, I have just mentioned a few to point out the good of advertising.

I am more for advertising than I am against it.

Initial Comments from the Instructor

The student demonstrated potential for achieving her goals in a very short time as she had a high reading level and had passed parts of the GED Predictor test. Her concerns about writing center around passing the GED writing sample and being able to write effectively enough to meet the entrance requirements for an office occupations program. The composition was written about two months before she took the GED.

The student needed information and instruction about expository writing since she had not done this kind of writing for some time. During the student/instructor conference, the student was told that she showed good spelling and usage skills in her paper, but that she had revising to do in the paper's organization and development of ideas. The checklist was used as an integral part of the discussion.

DIAGNOSIS

a. *Purpose: This is an example of a paper in which the person needs a better understanding of the task. It is interesting to note that the student has begun by restating the question adequately and in the first paragraph goes on to give an example to support her statement. As the paper continues, however, she loses sight of the idea of "advertising affecting people's spending decisions." She also needs to see that she was not aware of her intended audience (the manager of the station). (Curriculum items 1b, 2a, 3a)*

b. *Organization/Ideas: This paper has three stated ideas. The idea about advertising of toys affecting spending in a negative way is appropriate and relative to the topic. This paragraph should be expanded with some good support material. It frequently happens when students first begin to write that they will come up with adequate ideas, but forget to develop them with support material. This becomes an ideal place for instruction to take place. An effective instructional technique is to hold a conversation with the student asking her to state her intended main idea, give some examples of toy commercials which persuade children to want unnecessary or expensive toys, and tell how commercials persuade children. Once verbalizing the ideas, it is often fairly simple for the student to transfer the ideas on to paper.*

The meaning of the second paragraph is quite unclear. It is helpful to ask the student to describe what she meant to say. Often, there can be the beginnings of a good idea here. It could turn out, however, that this idea could be irrelevant to the topic and should be left out. The student needs to begin to discern the relevant and irrelevant ideas.

The third paragraph states a potentially good idea--the idea that a person who is home-bound might rely on advertising for opportunities to make a better existence. In the rewritten composition, the student has expanded this idea with further support material but has still not stated how the idea is related to the topic of the paper. (Curriculum item 5a)

c. *CSWE: The composition in its first writing is wordy and imprecise. There is improvement in the second paper. This student rewrote this paper after a conference with the instructor and after reading through the instructional materials in which suggestions were made which included a discussion of the holistic scoring chart. The instructor did not "correct" the paper, but made suggestions about how more precise words could be used. There was also discussion on unclear pronoun reference which is a common issue in students' compositions. The instructor needs to ask "Who are they?" Students who are GED candidates usually can get on the right track with this issue. (Curriculum item 8a)*

This composition has a lengthy diagnosis, but the student was able to grasp all of the information given by the instructor. As they talked the instructor wrote the suggestions that were discussed in outline form and gave the outline to the student to use in re-writing the composition. The checklist was also used with the student to help her focus on the specific skills that were emphasized in the discussion.

PRESCRIPTION

This is the prescription sheet for Student B.

PRESCRIPTION	*INSTRUCTION/MATERIALS*
Purpose	1. *Read the task and restate the purpose.* 2. *Read two other topics and underline the key words and phrases.*
Organization	1. *Rewrite paragraphs with supporting details.* 2. *Refer to paragraph writing in texts.*
Ideas	1. *Rewrite paragraphs 2 and 3 and state more clearly the ideas expressed here.*
CSWE	1. *Correct your paper for errors in uses of pronoun and antecedent.* 2. *Do exercises in use of clear pronoun reference.*

INSTRUCTION

As this student wrote other compositions in preparation for the GED, she was instructed to state the topic in the first paragraph, and also to keep to the topic throughout the paper. It can be shown how the addition of a few phrases or sentences can accomplish this.

It is important to say to students that when they are writing, they may be thinking that what they say relates to the topic. However, unless they put the thought into words, the reader of the composition will not assume anything.

This student can benefit from exercises in individual paragraph writing. These exercises will help the student to become more precise in her use of language. Paragraph writing is appropriate, also, so that the student can have opportunities to better state, express, and develop her ideas.

This paper should be rewritten one or two more times so that the student may be instructed in ways to develop her ideas more clearly and to relate her ideas to the overall purpose of the paper. It is not appropriate to expect a student to grasp the many skills that are outlined in this checklist in one or two sessions. Rather, over a period of time, the student will gain understanding of all the separate skills involved in composing a piece of writing.

EVALUATION

The instructor used holistic scoring to ascertain the level of each of the student's compositions. Since the instructor had explained holistic scoring to the student, she could begin to understand how her compositions would be rated for the GED.

Each of the student's compositions showed an improvement in one area or another. In approximately two months, the student showed both readiness to pass the writing sample of the GED and had improved her use of English enough to enter the office occupations program. This student was able to achieve both of her stated goals.

CONCLUSION

Programs needing to install a writing skills curriculum for use in Adult Basic Education and High School Equivalency classes can do so by having guidance staff and instructors in the program address the same topics that were covered in this resource paper. The topics included in the paper are:

CURRICULUM	*PRESCRIPTION*
ASSESSMENT	*INSTRUCTION*
DIAGNOSIS	*EVALUATION*

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The steps discussed in this paper have proved helpful for programs choosing to systematically install a writing skills curriculum while addressing each topic. The steps are:

* *STEP 1. Develop/Customize/Adopt a Writing Skills Curriculum.*
* *STEP 2 Design a locator(s) that can help the tester determine whether a student has the prerequisites necessary to be further assessed.*
* *STEP 3 Design assessment instruments that determine to what extent a student needs instruction in writing skills.*
* *STEP 4 Provide initial information about writing skills to the student before diagnosing the student's writing strengths and weaknesses.*
* *STEP 5 Diagnose the student's writing.*
* *STEP 6 Prescribe specific materials and modes of instruction to achieve the learning outcomes and attain the student's goals.*
* *STEP 7 Instruct students based on each student's prescription.*
* *STEP 8 Provide inservice workshops to present new techniques, materials, and discuss the excitement and frustration of teaching writing skills.*

* *STEP 9* *Provide a design that includes both formative and summative evaluation for students working on writing skills.*

* *STEP 10* *Plan to evaluate the success of the installation of the writing skills curriculum every six months to make necessary changes.*

* *STEP 11* *Devise a record-keeping system that includes each student's diagnosis, prescription, student writing and evaluations.*

* *STEP 12* *Develop a management plan for the classroom including time allotments for large group, small group, one-to-one instruction, conferencing, and record-keeping.*

The steps suggest a way for programs to achieve systematic installation of a writing skills curriculum and evaluate the results of the installation for future program improvement.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dorothy Hammond, Resource Series for Teaching Writing to Adults: Curriculum Outline for Teaching Writing to Adult Students. (Two Year College Development Center, State University of New York at Albany, 1986), pp. 1-19.

2. Ibid., pp. 1-19.

3. Wilbert J. Levy, Composition: Prewriting, Response, Revision. (Amsco Publications, Inc., 1982), pp. 9-10.

4. Myra Baum, The Cambridge Program for GED Writing Sample. (Cambridge Book Company, 1986), p.36.

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